

The Scarsinvale Saga

Conemur iterum

September, 2023 A.T.

Locust Assaults Scarsinvale: Refugees, Townsfolk, Locals Attacked

An elven assassin known only as 'The Locust' has been attacking the town and environs of Scarsinvale. Populations of refugees, regional mystical practitioner 'The Bog Witch', farmers, merchants, and travellers have all come under assault by this killer and his servants.

With a death toll in the dozens so far, it is perhaps even further disturbing that this assassin uses foul necromancy to assault the spirits of his victims. Souls of

the recently murdered have been captured in jars. Such a jar would appear to be a sealed glass or metal container that has the unearthly glow of a soul to those with the ability to sense spirits. Opening the jar will release the soul, and allow it to be resurrected as normal.

The Locust's forces seem to be acting in response to the Serpent Clan bounty, which targets Scarsinvale locals. However, given the viciousness of the attacks, it is difficult not to at

least speculate that there may be more behind the motivations for these heinous murders.

The *Saga* is pleased to report that a crack team of arcanists, adventurers, faithful, and warriors-at-arms have been able to recover some of the stolen souls, and have returned some of the fallen to life. We can only hope that moving forward, this positive momentum will be of assistance putting an end to the crisis for good. Travellers are advised to move in groups.

Giant Centipedes To Hallucination Moths: A New Menace

A new horror seems to have emerged from the Reach; giant centipedes, nesting near Scarsinvale, with a paralytic venom. These centipedes are aggressive and appear to be parasitic, requiring a living host for their young.

After paralyzing the victim, the parasite then attempts ingress, leaving the victim helpless to resist. Interrupting this process while it occurs is the best chance to prevent it, but surgical or mystical intervention can then remedy the issue, with some considerable difficulty.

Anyone seeing these giant centipedes is encouraged to flee, most definitely if they are alone. Even the most doughty adventurer can be brought down by a lucky blow, and may then be subject to a fairly gruesome death.

It appears that these centipedes have a secondary phase to their life cycle; after pupating, they become large moths, complete with hallucinogenic spores or toxin. These moths also seem interested in carrying off the disabled, and should be treated as a considerable threat.

Athan Holy Site Reclaimed!

A local holy site of Atha, goddess of the Earth, and plantlife, was recently seized and desecrated by followers of Stasa, the goddess of Endings, undeath, murder, and untimely death.

With the site filled with undead, holy symbols of Atha were desecrated, and replaced with symbols of Stasa, seeking to make use of the power of the holy site.

Fortunately a team of local adventurers to the Scarsinvale area were able to thread the gauntlet of undead that

had been left to discourage interlopers. With the ad hoc defences pierced, the holy site was reclaimed and cleansed of the dark magic that had interfered with its normal function.

In addition to now having regular services now restored in service of Atha to the region, locals should be vigilant for subsequent undead that may have been displaced. While the ones in the holy site itself were destroyed, it is not uncommon for undead no longer under a necromancer's control to 'wander'.

Better Know a Neighbour: Maegril

Trusting – and knowing – the people who make up your neighbours and allies can make all the difference. In the interests of furthering this, the Saga sat down with Wren of Scarsinvale.

Saga: Just for our readers, could I ask for your name and a little about yourself?

Mae: Yeah! My name is Maegril Evergaard, but my friends call me Mae. I'm from a now non-existent village near the Eldersire border called Kyenlune. Here in Scarsinvale I am the Guildmaster of our Mages Guild. My hobbies include disappointing my mentors and embroidery.

Saga: Great! So what brought you to Scarsinvale?

Mae: I actually wound up displaced in the Broken Reach for a couple of years after the war and had joined one of the clans here. But I moved west because I found I wasn't growing the way I wanted to. When adventurers from Yorik decided to come out here, I thought it was a good opportunity to return. We're building something special in Scarsinvale, and I want to help that grow. Hopefully, in good ways.

Saga: Do you have any advice for anyone coming to Scarsinvale?

Mae: Don't travel alone. There's a lot to be said for the buddy system and it will always save lives. We take care of our own. I also don't recommend picking up

anything with you bare hands and without protections. You never know when there's a trap hidden in that tree hollow or a curse on that gold ring!

Saga: Great advice! Any plans for the future?

Mae: Thank you! Personally, I'm working on getting the Guild more established and offering tutoring to anyone who's looking for it. I've also been working on teaching the Ratkin out here how to read. Otherwise, we're working on growing the town and I think starting to really establish shops and trades.

Saga: Thanks for your time!

Mae: You're welcome!

Horoscopes

The future is an unknown country. However, ideas and visions of the future may stem from information of the present; your decisions help to make the world you live in tomorrow. To that end, we have published a generalized horoscope for each of the Calendar Birth Signs, and hope that it will serve to amuse and enlighten. Horoscopes provided by Seer Oren Freedman.

The Shroud (Dec 31st – Jan 28th)

Oil on troubled waters can calm waves; oil around a fire can ignite. The same solution may have vastly different results depending upon circumstance, and this is a lesson that you must take to heart this month. Lucky numbers are 3, 7, and 11.

The Harp (Jan 29th – Feb 27th)

Read carefully any document that is put in front of you; the greatest sign of mastery of language is economy of language, but precision in documents of import can make a big difference in contracts and laws. Seek wealth from an unexpected avenue this month.

The Fount (Feb 28th – Mar 30th)

We are equal to the challenges that we face if we make ourselves equal to them. The greatest impediment that we will reliably encounter begins within; the doubt that we are able to make good on our oaths, to combat the foe, to build what we need. This is a lie told from within, and must be overcome.

The Dice (Mar 31st – Apr 28th)

Do not underestimate the costs of a strategy that may prove victorious. There may be no better solution; there

may be no better choice. But simply dismissing the cost without consideration will lead to ruin just as surely as ignoring the problem because the cost is too high. Make your decision from an informed and sage perspective.

The Arrow (Apr 29th – May 27th)

The Shroud will have insights for you this month that you may not wish to hear. Nevertheless, your life will be bettered by listening to the advice of someone that you might not otherwise have agreed with. Beware beings in black and red offering deals.

The Stone (May 28th – Jun 25th)

The undead are not the only creatures thought put to rest who may trouble you this month! Old business may rear its ugly head once more, and the shadows of deeds and actions thought long past will return to haunt you. Consider what you have done in past and how it may arise.

The Coin (June 26th – July 28th)

A coin that is spent, is spent. You cannot reliably count on refunds or returns; rather, acknowledge that when you have made your purchase, you got something in return that you may be able to leverage in a new or different way than what you spent in order to get it. Use this to your advantage and growth.

The Spade (July 29th – Aug 30th)

The Hearth may appear to be in opposition to you; consider that you may be working toward the same end via differing means. There is no substitute for hard work in overcoming the challenges that will face you this month, but you do not need to do it alone.

The Blade (Aug 31st – Sept 27th)

The weapon nearest to hand may not be the only one available to you, and may not be the best one for the foe you now face. Consider whether there are other options, less intuitive, that may fit the problem that you are facing better; these solutions may be more effective in seeking a resolution.

The Mask (Sept 28th – October 31st)

There's nothing that you need that you cannot acquire; the question is in addressing the things that you *want*. Separating your needs from your desires can help you to form a more healthy relationship with both. Avoid things that come in fours, for they are marked by death.

The Shield (Nov 1st – Nov 29th)

Nothing lasts forever; the ability to withstand must therefore include the ability to flow and balance your life with change. Sometimes the greatest testament to resilience is flexibility. You will have an unusual encounter with someone dangerous; be careful what you say, and doubly careful what you commit yourself to doing.

The Hearth (Nov 30th – Dec 30th)

Don't despair; though things may seem grim, this is the pain of movement. You may encounter a leap of faith; it is no crime to not find yourself in a position where you can trust it enough, but if you do not undertake it at some point, ready or not, you will miss out on an important opportunity. The Fount has thoughts that may help to clarify lingering concerns that you have had for a while.

Editorial: Always Another Problem

It is sometimes observed that there always seems to be another problem. Another hill to climb, another foe to thwart; it can be frustrating when you put so much effort into solving one issue, only for another to spring up, like a zombie that won't stay down.

If this sounds familiar, you might be currently reflecting on the fact that the Zorii were only just defeated, and now there's a coterie of assassins seemingly dedicated to making

an absolute nuisance of themselves. Or, perhaps more worryingly, some other issue that has arisen.

Living in a frontier means that sometimes you're on the long end of the arm when it comes to help solving a problem.

With Scarsinvale striving for city-state recognition, that only amplifies the potential issue: nations are expected to look out for their own people, and to resolve their own issues. It goes away when you make it.

But the dividend is worth it.

Peace is always fragile and temporary – so is life, if you want to get morbid about things. The goal is not for a peace that lives forever; but for a now that is worth living in.

Scarsinvale has its issues, and it struggles mightily against them. There will always be another problem, because the world has no shortage; take a moment and celebrate your victory, then draw the load again.

- Oren D'vann, Editor.

Matters of Faith

Holy Days Just Past

August 8th: Mushroom Feast (Blythe)

An unpalatable observance, the Mushroom Feast is the holy day of Blythe, god of decay and disease. While not ideal, there are still some observances that are well-advised on this day. Having a thorough physical, to say nothing of being especially wary of poisons in food, beverage, and the sting and bite of creatures are all excellent ideas.

September 18th: Day of the Blade (Hemulis)

The god of warfare's holiday is celebrated by his faithful through trials of combat and tests of martial prowess. It is said that on his holy day, Hemulis spends the day embodied upon the plane, training with some of his faithful and recharging in holy battle. Servants of Hemulis spend this day in holy struggle

\Forthcoming Holy Days

October 6th: Dreamer's Wake (Bard)

The servants of Bard commemorate this day as the day that Bard returned to the world. The goddess of stories and dreams, Bard's servants often mark this as a day of rest, or a day to tell tales, both tall and true. Most importantly, it is observed as a day when anything, even outlandish things usually only found in fairy stories, can happen. Join friends in telling stories of times past or dreams yet to be realized.

October 15th: Harvest Song (Arkady)

The celebration of Harvest song is a celebration of the beauty of autumn, and the joys shared at the harvest. Harvest song traditionally notes the changing of the colours of the leaves, and is celebrated with a large feast. Primping and preening before the feast, and donations to Arkady are traditional.

A Message of Faith

Honouring one's commitments is literally called 'keeping faith' for a reason. While someone may be held blameless for losing faith, or for breaking an oath under extreme duress, these are the challenges of keeping faith in difficult times.

Breaking faith when times are easy is paradoxically simple. You can lose faith when there is nothing testing it, because it is easier to stray. To allow one transgression, to permit one excess. Failing to keep the faith when things are going well is simple because there are few reminders of the need for that commitment.

Whether you find yourself in peace or in struggle – and there is, admittedly, no shortage of struggle in the world at the moment – remember that the commitments that you make speak more to your character than the benefits that you may receive.

Thinking Above Your Weight Class

While Scarsinvale and its denizens have never shied away from a fight, there are times when the world throws at the townsfolk more than they can ably manage.

With this in mind, it behooves us to plan, to think, and to act in conjunction with preparation. When facing off against the mindless undead, remember that unless controlled by a greater undead being or spellcaster, they do not think or plan, making them susceptible to simple traps – even a trip wire or barrier pit can make

a difference for someone fleeing for their lives!

Running into a fight can be laudable when the costs are well weighted, but Yorik's greatest victories have come when we have used sense and reason in conjunction with our martial might. If, for instance, we sought to inconvenience a bonelord that we did not have the capacity to banish, severing its limbs will not allow it to generate a new body, but will severely hamper such a beast.

Adventurers, explorers, and heroes are at our strongest when we best leverage our advantages. Take what you know, and use it to keep the enemy wrong-footed. For intelligent foes, hurl insults, jokes, anything that they might not expect; a demon that has fallen to its knees laughing is likely to lose a fight as surely as one that has been mortally wounded.

Remember that you have friends and allies, and work together.

*Bozo the Jester's
"Scent of the Circus" Perfume
"When something smells funny, let it be you."*

Community Board

This section is reserved for information about the community, and may include unverified information as well as community events.

*

The *Saga* is calling for donations to be raised in support of the Hammerfrost refugees. Offering up aid and succor to these refugees will help to show Scarsinvale's

character on the international stage, and also prove a chance to do real good.

*

A number of locals have reported finding coins in their boots. Usually of low value and denomination, these coins are ancient, minted by nations no longer appearing on the map. This seems to correspond with no known holiday or mystical being.

The roots of a fallen tree came up with an unexpected find; the perfectly intact but inanimate skeleton of a giant mole, cause of death so far unknown. Its bones were carved with an intricate, delicate pattern..

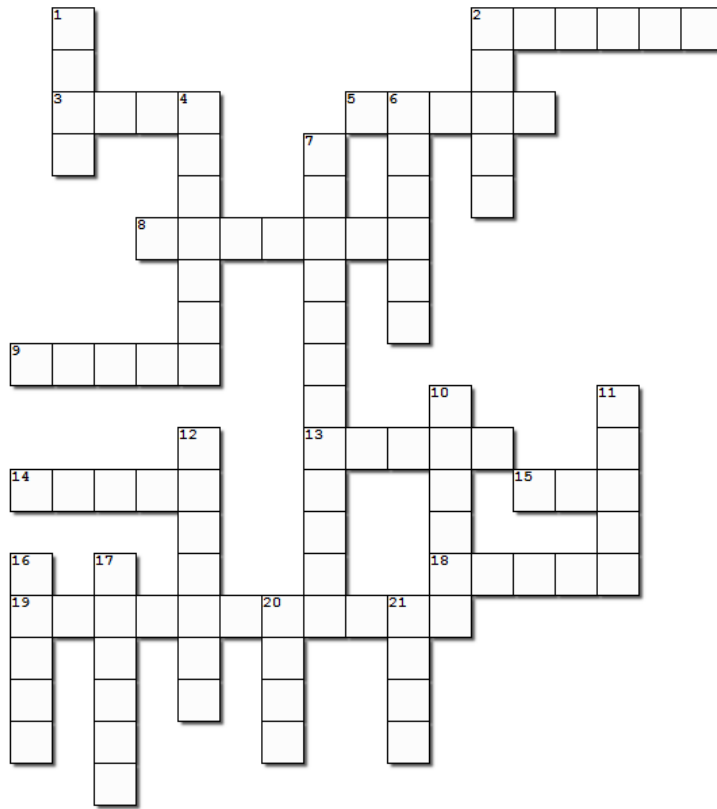
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Portents: A two-headed lamb born in the Reach. A man whose beard was stark white, now growing bloody red.

***The Saga is brought to you by our Generous Advertisers.**
For the duration of the Hammerfrost Refugee Crisis, all proceeds from advertisements will go to the relief fund.
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If you have **news**, an **announcement**, a clever **contribution** or a piece of **art** you would like displayed, don't keep it to yourself! The *Saga* is happy to help you reach a broader audience!

Crossword



Across

- 2. An ale-house or bar.
- 3. Fortune, good or bad.
- 5. A long-bladed weapon.
- 8. A mirror on a wall can _____ on things.
- 9. To craft with steel or other metals.
- 13. To investigate or ask nosy questions.
- 14. A hyena-like humanoid.
- 15. A bitter beer with high alcohol content.

- 18. A pole with a point.
- 19. A spell for making a magical meal.

- 11. Transparent or translucent.
- 12. Makes oils, compounds, some liquids.
- 16. A spirit cursed to consume.
- 17. Goddess of beauty.
- 20. The weave of destiny.
- 21. A tale of heroes and villains, north-word.

Down

- 1. As nights grow longer, the temp.
- 2. Fire on the end of a stick.
- 4. A wood that has the strength of steel.
- 6. A time of ice and snow.
- 7. The holiday, October 6th.
- 10. An asshole assassin, locally, recently.

Riddles

Riddle 1:

I'm a pathway to learning,
And the windows to soul,
Blue, green, grey or hazel,
With a heart dark as coal.

Answer 1: *seyE*

Riddle 2:

I say as I see,
And I see as I say,
I'm betimes hard to
stomach,
And your nerves I may fray.

Answer 2: *hturT*

Riddle 3:

I rest beneath the earth, a
stone,
But blaze when so ignited,
Though Alwyn may not love
my fumes,
The smith is so delighted.

Answer 3: *laoC*

Riddle 4:

I cannot be held very long,
By strong or weak alike,
Without me you would be
no more,
Though never do I strike.

Answer 4: *htaerB*

Riddle 5:

I rid your house of rodents,
And I'm more than I may
seem,
Within me thunder rumbles,
When you feed me full of
cream.

Answer 5: *taC*

Riddle 6:

I whisper in your ear,
Tell you all you fear,
I make your remorse fear,
When your conscience
failed to steer.

Answer 6: *tliuG*

Recipe of the Month: Ratatouille

A hearty vegetable stew to keep out the chill of autumn nights.

- O Freedman

Ingredients:

1/3 cup Olive Oil
5 large cloves of garlic
2 large onions, sliced
2 medium bell peppers, cored and sliced.
6 medium tomatoes, cut into 8 pieces
6 medium zucchini, cut into 1/2 inch thick rounds.
1/4 cup flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
1/4 cup basil, roughly chopped
6-8 springs of fresh thyme
2 tsp salt (to taste)

Add olive oil and garlic to a large, heavy-bottomed pot and saute until garlic is brown and fragrant.

Reduce heat to low, and add in onions and bell peppers. Cover, and allow onions to wilt, stirring occasionally. Remove the lid, and allow water to evaporate until onions start to brown.

Add the tomatoes, cover the pot with the lid, and simmer until the tomatoes are soft and have released a lot of liquid.

Add the zucchini, parsley, basil

thyme, salt and pepper to taste. Stir to combine and then cover with a lid and allow the vegetables to cook until tender (30-40 minutes), stirring occasionally.

When the vegetables are soft, remove the lid, and let the ratatouille continue to simmer until the excess liquid has evaporated and the stew is nice and thick. Adjust the salt and pepper to taste and serve with crusty bread.

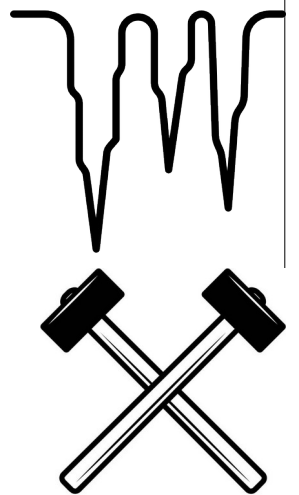
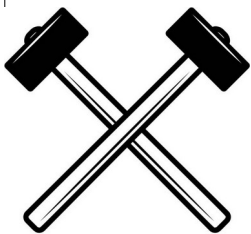
Goes well with a few shots of hot sauce if you want some additional kick.



Hammerfrost Needs You!

Food, equipment and your **good will** are required to take the fight to the undead body snatchers!

Contact Kellskagg of the Scarsinvale Dwarven Enclave for more details!



A Verse

By Bentan Wobbleroot

There was a gnome, not long ago,
Perhaps a few odd decades back,
That roamed the land, both high and low,
Seeking a legendary snack.

He searched his home, first and foremost,
That food accessed with greater ease,
His favourite was fern leaf on toast,
Accompanied by rich Splish cheese.

Soon he went to other lands,
Trying foods both near and far,
From Vrek round roast to wyvern gland,
D'Shunn taboos near Mythostar.

He travelled to a dragon's lair,
The temptation made him brave,
He polished off the candied bear,
The Dragon found him in her cave.

His spine went crack his guts went squish,
And when the dragon had a taste,
She found the gnome tasted of fish;
She made a really grossed-out face.

So now you know the final facts,
And now you know what not to do,
Take care when stealing dragon snacks,
Lest you may find the snack is you.

Combating the Undead

With undead burrowed into the snows throughout the nations of the Lakes District, it behooves the Adventurer as a public organ to provide a public service reminder.

When facing off against the undead, it can be easy to panic. There is an inherently unnerving nature to seeing the dead move autonomously, in ways that resemble but do not closely mimic the movements of the living.

Keeping your head is the surest way to keep your head. Remember these techniques, and you will have a fighting chance at surviving your encounter

and even coming out on top!

When facing **skeletons**, remember that as they do not bleed, edged weapons are of limited effect. A stout cudgel is your friend here, or a staff – seek, and the forest will provide.

Skeletons are largely immune to arrows, but succumb quickly to the careful slinger; again, nature is your friend here. If you have access to holy light, this too is of great effect.

Zombies are stronger, tougher, and have retained their flesh to

better tear and beat at yours. Although still arrow resistant, they have no resistance to blades. The true horror of a zombie stems from its ability to rise again after being apparently slain.

To forestall this, you are best served cleaving heads and limbs, such that this reanimation avails them naught.

Of **Wraiths and Ghouls**, the average adventurer is well served to flee. Although aggressive, these undead have no ability to move faster than a running person. Wraiths can phase through solid objects,

and ghouls can manifest spell-like abilities, both resistant to steel or wood.

A silvered weapon may serve well the hand that bears it against these foes, and magic – excepting dark magic – is the adventurer's friend.

As these are both spirit-type undead, a cleric capable of raising the dead from a spirit may be able to raise these fallen foes once they have been defeated. Doing so is initially likely to be a liability in a fight – the subject, like any raised soul, will not recall their time spent dead, or an hour before. If you do this, be prepared to defend your new friend.

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New Monsters and Novel Challenges

There may come times when you are facing off against something wholly new. This can be a difficult challenge; with many forms of monsters and challenges, there is at least some manner of precedent. A zombie giant is tougher and larger and more difficult to fight, but at its core is still a zombie.

A creature that does not easily compare to existing threats can be more difficult to find weaknesses or anticipate strengths.

To this end, the *Saga* has these handy pieces of advice for what to do

when a monster or challenge is entirely novel to you.

1. Don't panic. Panic can reduce your powers of observation and can prevent you from coming up with new ideas and things to try. This can take practice to quell within yourself, but will most often help your situation.

2. Look for any outward signs as to the nature of the creature. Beings that are semi-solid such as oozes, may be corrosive or acidic. Beings that are large tend to be strong, but may not be nimble – attacking from a distance

may give it additional trouble!

3. Try to determine if the creature is acting on orders, instinct, or intelligence. A creature that is following orders (like many forms of created undead) is not creative, and may not know what to do in a situation that it has not been prepared for.

4. See if the creature corresponds to anything in your environment. If there is a fire blazing nearby, it may be elementally aligned with fire. If it is specifically *avoiding* that fire, try hitting it with fire.

5. Try to observe the creature physically, so that you can describe it to others. Any observations that you make can then be compiled with observations that others may make if they encounter the same creature, or similar ones, elsewhere.

6. Don't be afraid to retreat. If you find that you are overwhelmed, it is more important that you tell others about this threat than that you personally defeat it. Retreating so that you can do so is the best thing that you can do to help your friends and neighbours.

Comic Strips



Handy To Have On Hand: A Guide to Adventuring Kit

It can be hard to save the region, fight evil fae, and still remember to take care of yourself. In this ongoing series, the Saga will give some tips for keeping your gear in functioning order.

Don't forget – if you look after your gear, it will look after you.

There are many who, when asked “what the most important equipment to have and maintain for an adventurer?” will say that surely the answer must be arms and armour. However there are a number of mundane articles which, kept in reasonable quantity and available to hand, may prove just as invaluable.

Consider packing some of these articles:

Rope: A good length of rope, ideally weighted to bear at least your body weight, can allow you to easily climb, bind, or work together to pull a large object.

Oil: Useful for keeping lamps lit, lubricating rusty hinges, burning a troll, or helping you to squeeze through a tight spot.

Lamp/Torch: You might be travelling in broad daylight, but your adventures may take you somewhere dark. Having a lamp specifically can be useful; a hooded or bullseye lantern allows you to shutter it when you don't need it.

Tinderbox: The ability to make a fire anywhere at any time can truly spell the difference sometimes.

Chalk: If you need to leave a quick note for those that come after you, mark out a trap, or work out some arcane maths, a stick of chalk can be very useful.

Paper and Oil Crayon: Ink is useful as well, but an oil crayon allows you to take rubbings of reliefs or impressions, which can help to study findings in a safer locale.

A Ball of Twine: With uses too numerous to succinctly summarize, a ball of twine can serve as a fuse, or even tie thumbs together.

Deck of Cards: There may come times when the best thing that you can do is wait. Why not lose a little money to your friends while you do so?